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Approved For Release 2007/03/06 : CIA-RDP79B00864A001400010016-9

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EAST EUROPE BRANCH NOTES

OCI #0604/74
2 August 1974

ROMANIA

Romanian "Concern" About Yugoslavia

The Romanian DCM in Budapest has described Yugoslav-Romanian relations as "slightly strained" and plagued by a "crisis of confidence." He cited these reasons:

--Tito's decision to grant overflight rights to the Soviets during the Mideast crisis last October; and,

--the fact that since the end of 1973 Tito has moved closer to Moscow.

The comments came in a broad-ranging conversation with a US diplomat on July 30.

The Romanian's remarks cleverly mix half-truths with self-serving elements. It is true that relations between Belgrade and Bucharest have encountered some unusual strains over the past year, but the communique from the Tito-Ceausescu summit in early July indicated that the two leaders had narrowed their differences. It is also true that Bucharest is nervous over closer Yugoslav-Soviet ties. But the Romanians are aware of concern in the West about the future of Yugoslavia, and the DCM seeks to associate Romania with this concern. This self-interest clearly emerged in his statement that his government and hopefully "others interested in Yugoslavia" will be watching developments in the Balkans with extreme care in the months ahead. His comment may also be designed to focus attention on the Romanians themselves who are preparing for their party congress in November. At that time, Bucharest is expected to reassert its independence in terms not to Moscow's liking.

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ROMANIA

Romania Attacks Western Press Stories of Sabotage

The party daily Scinteia has denounced recent Western press speculation that Romania's recent spate of industrial accidents

State Dept. review completed

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are acts of sabotage related to problems with the country's large Hungarian minority [REDACTED]

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Scinteia attacks the stories as deliberate attempts to discredit the Marxist-Leninist nationalities policy of the Romanian party and as an effort to distort Romania's fraternal friendship with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Scinteia goes on to express surprise at such distortions appearing in the press which it characterizes as a vehicle for the detente-related goal of bringing about a rapprochement among peoples.

The Romanian press had not previously reported the industrial accidents, which began last April. Bucharest apparently was content to remain silent because the stories focused international attention on Romania's real or imagined problems with Moscow. The Romanians, however, apparently felt compelled to deny the stories two days after Pravda carried a major article sharply rebutting Western press suggestions that the "sabotage" was somehow related to a Soviet effort to undermine maverick Romania. [REDACTED]

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EAST GERMANY

Pankow Soft-pedals Delay in Relations with US

East Germany's response to Washington's postponement of diplomatic relations over the harassment of travellers on the Autobahns leading to West Berlin has been muted. In a statement on his return to the GDR, chief negotiator Suess described the talks as "objective and constructive" and claimed that the "temporary" delay was not due to East Germany. His statement clearly meant to obscure the connection between the delay and the current difficulties over the Federal Environmental Office. Earlier East German commentary had laid the blame squarely at Bonn's door, saying that the delay was the only "concrete achievement" of the recent visit to the US by FRG Foreign Minister Genscher. [REDACTED]

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